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Looking and Listening

A Scenario for a Lively TV Hour

By KURT WACHENHEIM

EVERYONE TALKS about television, but it takes a man like Tom Murray, who lives at the Hampton Hotel, to do something about it. He's just outlined his brainchild for a new series which he calls "Chronic Agitation."

"It opens," Tom writes, "with a U. S. plane flying through a tropical storm. On board are Jayne Mansfield and an Air Force pilot—a handsome hunk. Jayne is en route to entertain GIs on a remote Caribbean isle. Because of the storm they are forced to crash-land on a seemingly deserted island. Jayne is uninjured, but the pilot needs medical assistance."

Out of the jungle walks a CIA agent who has been stranded there since the Bay of Pigs invasion. He tells the new arrivals that they are not alone. On the island, the CIA agent states, there are 85 aboriginals, 16 crocodiles, 48 poisonous snakes, 21 elephants, and a deserted barber-shop which he has been using as a subsidiary of the home office.

★ ★ ★

AT THIS MOMENT two men appear from the undergrowth—Ben Casey and Dr. Kildare. Both are on dislocation from Hollywood. They are dishevelled. Emaciated. Traumatized. Improvising surgical instruments from sea-shells and Jayne's costume jewelry, they save the pilot's life.

"At this moment they are attacked by the aboriginals. They are led by Sammy Davis Jr. who is actually an undercover man for the FBI. Jayne and company seem doomed. Suddenly from seaward comes a rat-a-tat of machineguns. An American LST, manned by a scabrous crew of Cubans with Castro in command, drives the natives away. Before Castro can land, however, Wagon Train appears. With Spencer and Sharps carbines they force the LST to leave. Offshore, the "Honey Fitz," converted into a torpedo boat, sinks the Cubans.

"A reconciliation with the natives follows. Jayne and the pilot embrace. Casey smirks. Kildare smirks. The CIA agent and Sammy get into a violent argument about modus operandi.

"As the scene starts to slowly fade, we hear a hissing of snakes, the roar of crocodiles, the trumpeting of elephants. In the background we hear, faintly, the cannibal chorus of "Aloha" being conducted by Mitch Miller. The End."

Tom thinks the show would be "superlative in color." It certainly has more to recommend it than much of the tripe these days, and Tom has more imagination than half the TV writers and idea men.

HEREWITH A JOKE, told between Beatles appearances Sunday on the Ed Sullivan Show by that master story teller, Myron Cohen, retold here for anyone who might have missed it because it's the funniest joke to be told on TV in a long time:

Having been trained for a year by the CIA for a vital secret mission, an intelligence agent is given final instructions and a fatal poison pellet to be lodged inside his gums and to be cracked open should he be discovered.

He is to be dropped into dense woods inside Yugoslavia, from there to sneak into Trieste for a rendezvous with a spy, who will give him further secret instructions. The spy, named Goldfarb, is to be contacted in an obscure apartment house and to be greeted with "the sun is shining today".

The agent succeeds in sneaking from the woods into Trieste unnoticed, discovers the house, looks at the mailboxes and is shocked to see there are two Goldfarbs. Undaunted, he flips a coin and decides to try the one on the top floor.

Once upstairs, the agent finds the door ajar and a man inside.

"Goldfarb?" he inquires.

"Certainly," is the reply.

"The sun is shining today," the agent ventures.

"Oh, you got the wrong floor. You want Goldfarb, the spy."